The pandemic has profoundly changed our lives, sometimes in unexpected ways. I wanted to share some of my personal experiences with you in the hope you might find them useful.

Fragility and perspective

The pandemic brought home the fragility of our lives. It seemed like everything was going great and then – in an instant – the world was on the brink of devastation.

If there ever was a time when good financial advice proved its value, this is it. Investors in an appropriate asset allocation, who "stayed in their seats" have been fine – financially.

Yet no amount of financial planning could prepare us for the emotional trauma of COVID-19, with all the uncertainty it brought.

Our personal planning (and I suspect many of your clients feel similarly) went from the theoretical to the practical. We wondered how our heirs would cope in the event we both died within a short time of each other. This is our new reality. We’re in the demographic of those likely to suffer serious complications if we are infected.

The possibility of imminent death impacted us in other ways.
I used to scoff at this hypothetical question: *How would you spend every day if you knew it was your last?* Now, I think about that possibility. It helps me put my concerns in perspective. How important are they, compared with those dying alone, with their loved ones tuned in via Facetime?

**An awareness of our limitations**

Competent advisors plan for black swan events, but I suspect few foresaw the scope of the current pandemic. These events should give us a dose of humility.

I may be the first person in your life to tell you this: There’s considerable evidence having lower self-confidence has many benefits.

If you had the persona of the all-knowing financial advisor, quick to dispense advice, and supremely confident of your expertise, the pandemic is a good opportunity to recognize your limitations.

**Recognize negativity bias**

If I had a vision six months ago what the world would look like today, here’s what I would have thought:

- The stock market would be down 80% or more.
- The recovery would be slow and agonizing.
- The global economy would be in a depression.
- My income from my coaching and digital marketing businesses would be zero.

I never would have predicted what has actually taken place, especially the relatively good performance of the market.

My initial reaction would have reflected a combination of negativity bias and catastrophizing. Both these traits adversely impact our mental health. They can also be very inaccurate.

**Adapt**

Along with many Americans, we have adapted to our new reality. We routinely wear face masks. We walk outdoors and climb stairs in our building, instead of going to the gym. We order vegetarian meals and have them sent to us, to limit the times when we need to go to the grocery store. We practice social distancing and only venture out when absolutely necessary.

On the business side, it’s not much of an adjustment for me. I work from home, where I have a well-equipped video studio.

You have also adapted well. You recognize this is great time to prepare for the economic recovery, by focusing on your marketing. My businesses have actually *increased* revenues since the pandemic began.

Maybe I’m looking for a silver lining, while still appreciating the personal devastation and loss of life this pandemic has wrought. Hopefully it will make us all more reflective, kinder and more empathetic.

If that occurs, no one will ever question of value of your services.

*For more information about marketing and branding opportunities with Dan’s upcoming book Ask: How to Relate to Anyone, click here.*